

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 5509**

My name is Dr. Fusaini Mohammadu. I'm 41 years old and live in Farmington, Ct. I'm a doctor in family practice, and I graduated from medical school in 2003 and completed my residency in 2007. A year later, after taking a job in Florida with the expectation my wife and son would follow me there, my wife filed for divorce.

She has worked since she was in high school. She is now an administrator at the University of Connecticut making \$80,000 with benefits. I work at a community health center.

I am here today to plead for your attention and ask you to support alimony reform in Raised Bill No. 5509.

Although I am a doctor, my alimony obligation, on top of my other obligations, has left me impoverished, in debt, and threatened with jail. My wages are garnished. I borrow money constantly from friends, family and co-workers, sometimes even to buy gas for my car. My loans from medical school of \$214,000 cost me \$1000 a month. Not having the money to pay my bills is most humiliating and leaves me with feelings of constant despair.

The essence of what I must tell you is that the system is broken, the laws do not protect families, and they need to be fixed as Raised Bill No. 5009 proposes to fix them.

I was married for eight years. After the divorce my wife wanted, I found I could not see my son in the ways we had agreed. I was in Florida, he was in Connecticut. He was falling behind in school, and I moved back here to be close to him. In order to do this, I took a job making \$30,000 less than I made in Florida. I am happy to say that he is now thriving in school, and the teachers have all told me that my returning was very good for him.

When I moved back here, my medical school loans began, and I could no longer pay the alimony to my ex-wife. I returned to court to ask for a modification, as my lawyer told me I could. But the court said NO. I had less income and more obligations, but the answer was "no." I appealed the case, and still the answer was "no."

The court ruled that because I had returned to Connecticut voluntarily, when I could have stayed in Florida making more money, I was not entitled to a reduction in my alimony or child support. The appellate court said that "the decision to relocate may have been a good parenting decision, but it ignored the realities of the dissolution judgment rendered several months earlier."

I cannot understand how the court could rule that my decision to help my struggling son by living near him would not be a significant consideration. At present, my ex-wife has more disposable income than I do. She is entitled to 30 more months of alimony as the same amounts I am paying now, and I have no idea how I will pay these bills.

Thank you.